WIC | Vendor News

Food Instrument Redemption Changes

Recent federal and state legislation requires all states to allow WIC participants to redeem their food instruments at any authorized vendor (grocer). Starting in October 2006, California WIC participants will begin receiving food instruments that no longer specify the vendor at which participants must redeem their food instruments. Food instruments will be payable to **"WIC AUTHORIZED VENDOR"** to allow WIC participants to redeem them at an authorized vendor of their choosing.

Under the new redemption changes, vendors **must** provide WIC with the serial number from each food instrument they redeem because the food instruments will no longer be vendor specific. Without receiving the serial number information from the vendor, WIC will not be able to authorize the State Treasurer's Office to make a payment to the vendor.

Three Options for Submitting Food Instrument Serial Numbers

There are three options for submitting the WIC food instrument serial numbers to WIC:

- Using the telephone
- Accessing the Internet and specially designed WIC website, or
- Directly submitting an electronic data file of serial numbers gathered from the Magnetic Ink Character Recognition (MICR) line of the WIC food instruments

Vendors may select an option that meets their business needs. Serial number submission allows the California WIC to continue to ensure only authorized vendors are reimbursed, and that every redeemed food instrument can be linked to the WIC authorized vendor who redeemed it.

A New Policy

Beginning October 1, 2006, all California WIC food instruments will be printed payable to **"WIC AUTHORIZED VENDOR."**

And So, New Procedures

You must **send in the serial numbers** on the food instruments redeemed at your store before depositing these food instruments in your bank. You can send in the serial number information to California WIC by any one of the three submission options described in this newsletter.

You may **check the status** of your food instrument serial number submission prior to depositing the food instruments in your bank by:

- Logging onto the WIC website or Vendor WIC Information eXchange (VWIX) at vwix.dhs.ca.gov
- Or if using the telephone option, calling WIC Technical Support at 1-800-224-7472 for help.

In This Issue

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- Instructions for Electronic File Submission Option
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WIC

INDIVIDUAL NO.	PARTICIPANT / PARENT / GUARDIAN	FIRST DAY TO USE	LAST DAY TO USE	SERIAL NO.
911515611IM	PATTY PARTICIPANT	JUNE 05 06	JULY 05 06	433900754

WIC PROGRAM
State of California

MILK/CHEESE/EGG

Kind to buy:
*MILK-COW, FLUID
PASTEURIZED(GALLONS ONLY)
*CHEESE-CHEDDAR, JACK,
AMERICAN, MOZZARELLA IN
0.75 LB (12 OZ) OR LARGER
*EGGS-AA WHITE, SM,MED,LG
How much to buy: UP TO:
2 GALLONS MILK,2 DOZ EGGS
(DOZENS ONLY)2 LBS CHEESE

Pay to the order of:
WIC AUTHORIZED VENDOR

700-433900754

90-1342 / 1211

EXACT PURCHASE PRICE:

*MUST NOT EXCEED MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE
DEPARTMENT REIMBURSEMENT RATE

$ #####

VALID FOR WIC APPROVED FOOD ONLY.
VOID IF NOT DEPOSITED WITHIN 45 DAYS OF
"FIRST DAY TO USE." NOT VALID IF ALTERED.

NON-NEGOTIABLE
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE (SIGN AT PURCHASE)

⑈0700⑈ ⑆121113423⑆ 4339007541 ⑈

The serial number is the last 10 digits located at the bottom of the food instrument.

Start Practicing
This Summer
During Vendor
Readiness

Each WIC authorized vendor contract owner will receive two user IDs with passwords for the computer system and a PIN (Personal Identification Number) for the telephone system. You will receive detailed instructions from WIC on the user IDs in a separate letter with this newsletter.

We recommend all vendors start practicing their chosen submission option as soon as possible this summer.

We are calling this practice time "vendor readiness." It allows you to practice your submission with actual serial numbers of food instruments that you redeem in your store before October 1, 2006. It is critical that you start practicing to ensure that you will be successful by October.

Telephone Option

Using the telephone may be best suited for vendors with a low volume of food instruments or without access to the Internet.

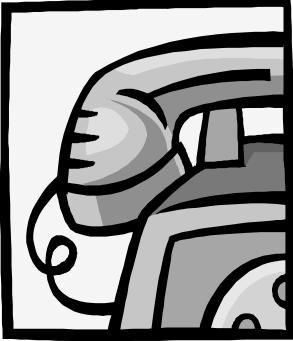You need the following information before placing your call:

- The toll-free 1-888-942-4942 number
- Your six-digit vendor identification (ID) number and your PIN
- The food instruments you will be submitting

REMEMBER

For the food instrument serial numbers to be accepted by the WIC system, you **MUST** complete all the steps. If you are using the telephone option to submit serial numbers from more than one store, you will need to send in each store's food instruments in a separate telephone call.

Telephone Submission Option Instructions

The telephone system voice walks you through each step for submitting your WIC food instrument serial numbers. You access the telephone system by calling the toll-free telephone number.

Step 1: Dial 1-888-942-4942 for the Telephone Option system.

Step 2: You will hear the system voice greeting. You will be asked to enter your store's six-digit vendor ID number followed by the pound (#) key.

> If you did not enter the full six (6) digits of your store's vendor ID number, you will be prompted to re-enter the number.

Step 3: You will be asked to enter your PIN followed by the pound (#) key.

> If you did not enter your PIN correctly, you will be prompted to re-enter your PIN followed by the pound (#) key.

Step 4: Please enter the first food instrument ten-digit serial number that you will be submitting for payment followed by the pound (#) key.

> If you do not enter all ten (10) digits, you will be prompted to re-enter the serial number followed by the pound (#) key. When the WIC telephone system has accepted the serial number, it will repeat the last four digits back to you.

Step 5: Repeat Step 4 for each food instrument serial number you are submitting.

Step 6: After submitting your last food instrument serial number, press the pound (#) key. The system voice will tell you the total number of food instruments that will be submitted for processing.

Step 7: Call WIC Technical Support at 1-800-224-7472 to confirm the submission status.

We recommend you check the status of your submissions, especially during the vendor readiness time this summer.

REMEMBER

Before depositing your food instruments into your bank, we recommend you check the status of your submission to see if the serial number information reached the WIC Program.

Did you know...?

If you have technical questions, call WIC Technical Support at 1-800-224-7472

Hours of Operation

Monday - Thursday	7:00 A.M.-7:00 P.M.
Friday	7:00 A.M.-5:30 P.M.
Saturday	8:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.
Closed on Sunday	

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WIC VWIX
Website Option

Accessing the WIC website to enter food instrument serial numbers may be best suited for vendors having a computer, web browser software, and an Internet connection.

No additional equipment or software is needed. Vendors may go to the WIC website and submit serial numbers several times per day.

You need the following information before you start:

- The WIC website address: vwix.dhs.ca.gov
- Your user ID and password
- The food instruments you will be submitting. If you have food instruments from more than one store, keep them in separate stacks.

Did you know...?

Each vendor contract owner will be given two user IDs. The vendor contract owner may request additional user IDs by calling WIC Technical Support at 1-800-224-7472.

WIC VWIX Website Submission Option Instructions

Step 1: From your computer's web browser screen, type in vwix.dhs.ca.gov to access the WIC VWIX website.

Step 2: You will come to the website logon screen. Enter your user ID and password. Click on SIGN IN.

Your user ID will be revoked after three (3) unsuccessful attempts at logging in, so be sure to type your user ID and password correctly. If you forget your password or need it reset, call WIC Technical Support at 1-800-224-7472.

Step 3: At the MAIN MENU, click ON ENTER SERIAL NUMBERS. You will come to the screen where you will type in the ten-digit serial numbers from the food instruments redeemed at your store.

If you have one store in your WIC vendor contract, you will automatically see the vendor ID number and store name.

If you have more than one store in your WIC vendor contract, you will need to select the correct store where the food instruments were redeemed.

For a Single Store in Your WIC Vendor Contract

- Type the ten-digit serial number found on the bottom of each food instrument into the box.
- Press the Tab key to go to the next box to the right.
- After you have typed in all food instrument serial numbers, click on SUBMIT.

For Multiple Stores in Your WIC Vendor Contract

- It is important to submit your food instrument serial numbers for the store where they were redeemed.

  In the upper left corner of the screen, click on the drop down box (↓) to show the list of vendor ID numbers and store names in your vendor contract. Select the correct store for the food instrument serial numbers you want to submit.
- Type the ten-digit serial number found on the bottom of each food instrument into the box.
- Press the Tab key to go to the next box to the right.
- After you have typed in all the food instrument serial numbers for that store, click on SUBMIT.
- To enter food instrument serial numbers for another store, click on START NEXT STORE. Type the serial numbers for the food instruments redeemed at this second store. Complete these steps for each store.
- After you have typed in all the food instrument serial numbers, click on SUBMIT.

REMEMBER

The web page will time out after 30 minutes of inactivity, and any unsaved data will be lost.

Step 4: Check the status of your submission. There are two ways to get to the screen to see the status of your submission:

- From the FILE WAS SENT SUCCESSFULLY screen, click on GO TO VIEW STATUS OF SUBMISSIONS
- From the MAIN MENU screen, click on VIEW STATUS OF SUBMISSIONS

From the STATUS OF SUBMISSIONS screen, you can see each submission by the date and time the submission was received, and you can see the details by vendor ID number of the total serial numbers submitted, the total accepted, and the total number of rejected serial numbers.
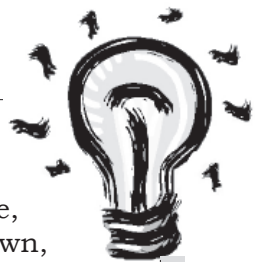
We recommend you check the status of your submissions, especially during the vendor readiness time this summer.

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Did you know...?

You will be able to alternate submission options. For example, if your Internet connection is down, you may submit your serial numbers using the telephone option. If your MICR electronic submission option is down, you may use either the telephone or the Internet option.

WIC

Electronic File Submission Option

Sending your food instrument serial numbers by electronic file submission may be best suited for vendors with a high volume of food instruments and who have equipment that can read the food instrument Magnetic Ink Character Recognition (MICR) line.

The food instrument serial number file can be submitted electronically by using the WIC website or by automating the file transfer using File Transfer Protocol (FTP) software.

The automated process can help increase effectiveness and efficiency, saving you time and reducing errors.

Electronic File Submission Option Instructions

Step 1: Find staff who can carry out the technical steps of this option. Possible approaches to locating technical expertise include contacting your staff in your organization, contacting the representatives of your electronic cash register systems, or referring to the list called "Companies Offering AAV Solutions to Vendors" on the WIC website at www.wicworks.ca.gov.

When evaluating the approach to electronic file submission, consider your business operations (i.e., do you currently use an electronic cash register to read checks; do you have a back office bookkeeping process that could use a MICR reader?).

Did you know...?

The VWIX system is available 24 hours per day, every day for file submission, except for one hour each month, the first Sunday from 7:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M. A second system maintenance occurs the first and third Mondays of each month from 12:00 A.M. - 2:00 A.M. when you cannot view the STATUS OF SUBMISSIONS screens. If Monday is a state holiday, this rolls to the following day, Tuesday.

Step 2: Identify which electronic submission method you will use. There are two ways to electronically submit food instrument serial numbers in a file:

- A fully automated process that is set up to send the file using FTP software using Secure Socket Layer (SSL). Technical expertise is required to successfully carry out the steps of this process.

- A partially automated process where the file of food instrument serial numbers is saved on your store's computer, and staff log on to the WIC VWIX website at vwix.dhs.ca.gov and click on SEND FILE from the MAIN MENU to submit the file. Some technical expertise is required to set up the file in the correct format.

Step 3: Once you select the method for your electronic submission and you complete the necessary technical changes to your system, you will want to test your file submissions during the vendor readiness time this summer.
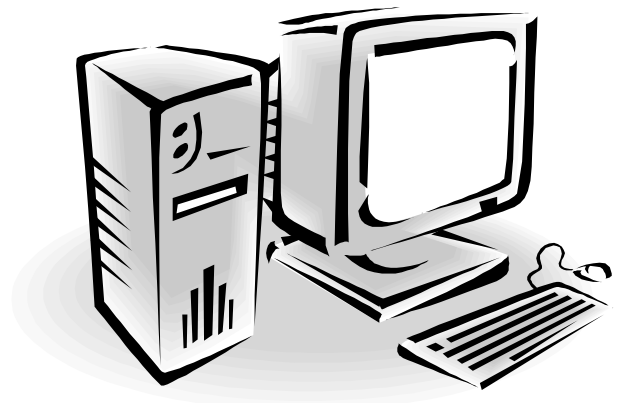
We have members of our AAV Technical Team who will assist you with testing your file submissions prior to October 1, 2006.

You may call WIC Technical Support at 1-800-224-7472 to be connected with your AAV Technical Team.

Did you know...?

On September 1, 2006, we want all vendors to begin submitting the serial numbers for food instruments redeemed in their stores. We want to make sure we can read all your files correctly and that there is a smooth transition on October 1, 2006, when all food instruments are printed with "**WIC AUTHORIZED VENDOR.**"

WIC

Need Help with Telephone or Website?

If after reading the information in this newsletter on the telephone and website options you feel you need additional help to be successful, WIC will be offering technical assistance sessions throughout the state in late July through August 2006 **for telephone and website users only.**

If you want to sign up for a technical assistance session, please contact Sharon Lindner by:

- **Telephone:** 1-916-928-8557
- **Fax:** 1-916-928-0706, a copy of the information to the right
- **Email:** slindner@dhs.ca.gov, the information to the right

Subject: Technical Assistance Session

I need help with:

☐ Telephone Submission

☐ Website Submission

PLEASE PRINT

Name _____

Date _____

Vendor ID Number _____

Contract ID Number _____

Store Name _____

Address _____

_____

Telephone _____

Fax Number _____

Email _____

Need Help with Electronic File Submission?

Go to www.wicworks.ca.gov for more technical information on Any Authorized Vendor (AAV) Project or call WIC Technical Support at 1-800-224-7472.

You will be connected to a member of the AAV Technical Team.